

Theological Grub-Ax

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THEOLOGICAL GRUB-AX.

A TREATISE ON INFANT BAPTISM.

BY THE REV. J. H. NICHOLS,

Author of "Furnace," "Pump," etc.

SEVENTY-FIRST THOUSAND.

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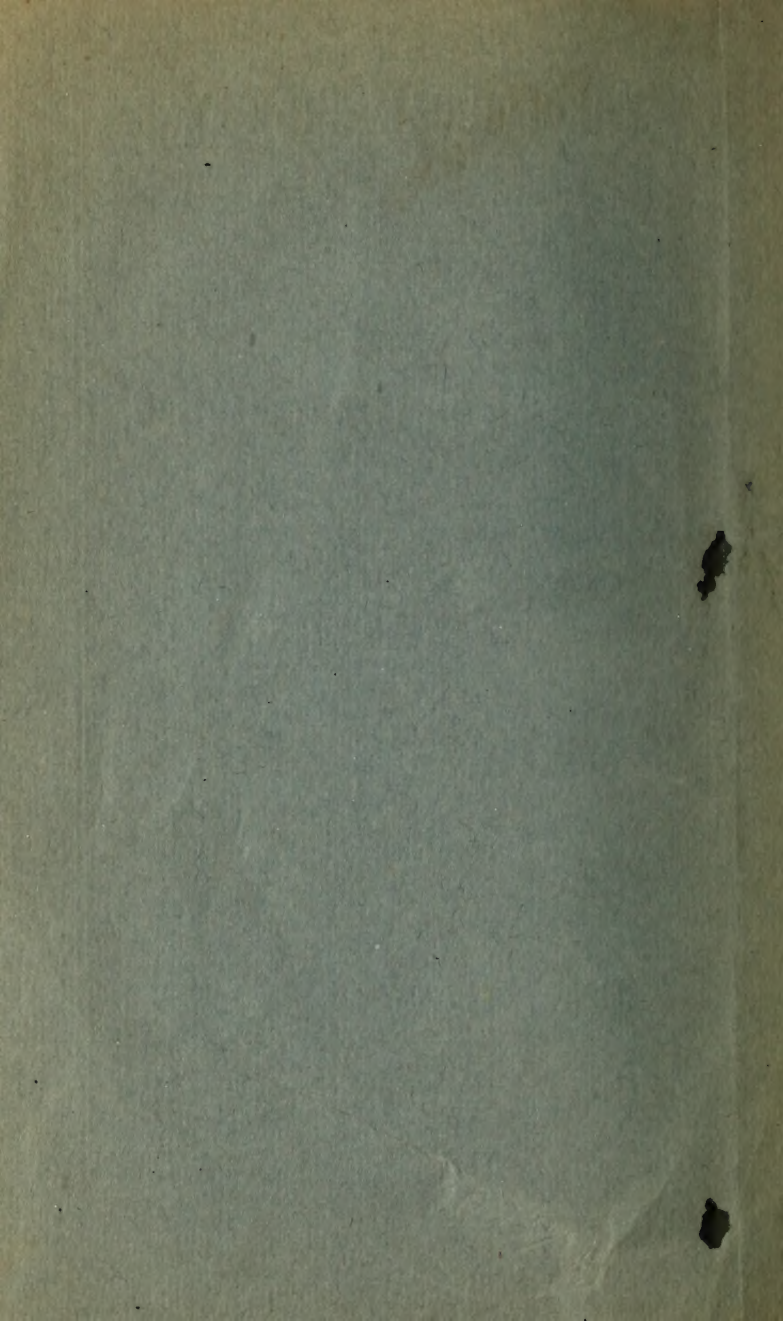
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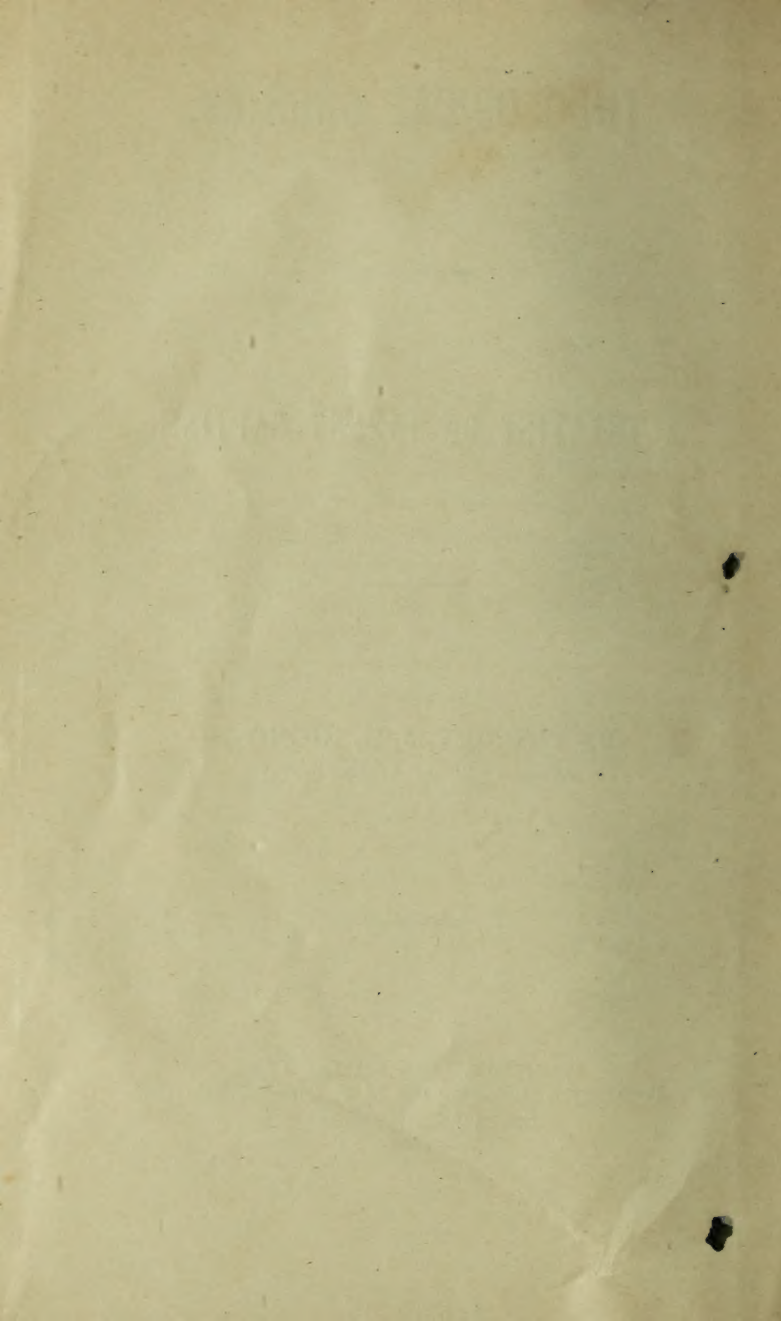
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THEOLOGICAL GRUB-AX.

HAVING been raised a farmer, and taught the use of the grub-ax, I have been casting about for a similar tool which might be used in extracting roots of error from the ecclesiastical field. I have made the discovery, and in this little book will reveal the secret, and show how the ax has been used in grubbing up the tap-root of a great error. The difference between *shrubbing* and *grubbing* is very marked. Shrubbing is taking off a shrub even with the top of the ground, leaving the root in the soil to send up five sprouts where it had only one before; while grubbing is taking out every root. The grub-ax is a much more valuable tool than the shrub-ax, though the shrub-ax is in more general use in the ecclesiastical field. The shrub-ax is made of orthodox iron, pointed with sarcasm, and tempered with stubbornness. The grub-ax is composed of Bible steel, pointed with love, and tempered with the Holy Ghost. This wonderful ax, faithfully used, will soon clear the ecclesiastical field of all shrubs of error; and where the deepest grubbing is done, there the richest plants of truth will grow. Take the grub-ax, brother, and pour in the licks. Rocks and dirt alike will crumble before it, and the more it is used the brighter and sharper it will be.

GRUBBER
(59)

INTRODUCTION.

IN regard to the Church of God there are three theories, viz.:

1. The Church of God now in the world is the same Church to which Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses and all the prophets, belonged and infants have a right to membership in it.

2. There is no true Church of God now on earth, except the Church which was organized by John the Baptist *somewhere* in the wilderness, *some time* during his public ministry; and children have *no right* to membership in it.

3. The only true Church now in the world is the one which Peter organized *in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost*; and it would be *very sinful* to admit infants to membership in it.

Now, it requires only about one-half of an ordinary eye to see that *two* of the above theories must be incorrect. Having been concerned for some time to know which one was correct, I took quite an interest in a dialogue I heard on the subject, and propose to give all concerned the benefit of what I heard. My hearing is very acute, and I think I shall be able to give the dialogue just as it was spoken.

The parties engaged in the dialogue seemed to be plain, common-sense men, and took it after the fashion of "club-fist"—take it off or I will knock it off. They did not discuss each other, but they did discuss each other's doctrine.

Yours, with much respect,

GRUBBER.

April 25, 1882.

CHAPTER II.

THE GRUB-AX.

CAMPBELLITE. Good-morning, Brother Methodist; I am happy to meet you this fine day. I hope you can spare the time to give me some information in regard to some of the doctrines taught by your Church, as they are contrary to what I understand the Bible to teach.

METHODIST. Certainly; I am at your service.

C. Your book of Discipline says that the "written word of God is the only rule, and the sufficient rule, both of our faith and practice." In reading my Bible, I fail to find any thing said about infant baptism. You Methodists baptize infants, and I would thank you for the scripture on the subject.

M. You shall have it, provided you will explain one thing you said in your sermon last night. You said, "When I ask sinners to come and confess Christ and obey the gospel, I do not invite them to the Methodist, Baptist, or Campbellite Church, but I invite them to Jesus." What did you mean by that?

C. I meant, (1) they must believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; (2) they must repent of their sins; (3) they must make the *good confession*; and (4) *be baptized*.

M. According to your doctrine, then, no one can come to Jesus without water baptism.

C. That is my doctrine, *strictly*.

M. Have all whom Jesus invites to him the right to come?

C. Certainly, they have; I suppose no one ever doubted that.

M. I will now give you one verse: "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God." (Mark x. 14.) Luke says they were "infants" (Luke xviii. 15). Now, we will try this scripture by your own theory: (1) You say all whom Jesus invited have a right to come; (2) no one can come without water baptism. Conclusion: Infants have been invited by Christ, therefore they have a right to baptism, according to your own theory. Will you have yours baptized?

C. O that is not fair; I did not see what you were driving at. Of course I cannot have my children baptized, for they are good enough; they do not need it.

M. Good enough? Do you think they are as good as you are?

C. They are much better than I am; but baptism would bring them into the Church, and that would not do.

M. Pardon me, please—are you in the Church?

C. O yes; I have been baptized, and that brought me in.

M. Look at your theory again: (1) You are in the Church; (2) your children are better than you are; (3) yet it would be very wrong to bring them into the Church. How is that? Are your children too good for the Church?

C. O no; but they have never sinned, and they do not need baptism until after they have committed sin; and they are not entitled to Church-membership until after baptism.

M. Actual sin, then, is a prerequisite qualification for Church-membership, is it? That would exclude Christ, for "he knew no sin."

C. You do not seem to understand me. I mean that if my children were to die, just as they are, *without being brought by baptism into the Church*, they would go to heaven.

M. Look at your theory again: Your children are better than their father—good enough for heaven—and yet they must be denied a place in the Church of God! Is the Church on earth purer
or what is the matter?

C. I think the Church on earth and heaven are *very different*.

M. Hear St. Paul on the subject: "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named." (Eph. iii. 14, 15.) Here Paul calls the Church a family, part of which is "in heaven," and part "in earth." Now, you think if your children were to die they would be recognized as members of the family "in heaven," but it would be wrong to recognize them as members of the family "in earth." Suppose a family going West were to leave some of the members at the old homestead to settle up some business, and then join the other members in the West; and suppose a little babe belonging to the family was left with those who remain at the original home, and the brothers and sisters should say, "We must not recognize this babe as a member of the family here, for doubtless our new home will be quite different from this one, and the babe will be a member of the family when it gets to our new home, of course; but it would be wicked to recognize it here," and cast the helpless little thing off, what would you think of their conduct?

C. I would think it very cruel and unjust to the child.

M. Then if (as Paul says) the Church on earth and in heaven is one family, and all children are recognized as members of the family in heaven, how cruel and unjust must it be for you to deny your children membership in the family on earth!

C. I must go now, but I will see you to-morrow, and we will talk about the "setting up of the kingdom," if it suits you.

M. That will suit me very well. Good-evening.

SETTING UP THE KINGDOM.

C. Now, Brother Methodist, I have come to remain with you until we settle this question of infant baptism, and I

want it settled by the Bible. You teach that the Christian Church is a continuation of the Jewish Church, or kingdom. Now, if that is so, who occupied that throne while Christ was on earth?

M. Jesus Christ.

C. There, now! I thought so! Did n't you know that Christ was not a king until Pentecost; that he went to heaven and took his seat on his throne, and sent the Holy Ghost at Pentecost to tell Peter that he was on his throne, and that it was time for him to set up the kingdom? Christ never was a king until Pentecost.

M. What book is that you have under your arm?

C. It is the New Testament. You Methodists are such folks to dodge, I brought it along to set you right and keep you right.

M. Please turn to Matt. ii. 2, and read will you?

C. Yes, sir: "Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews?"

M. How is that? Those "*wise men*" say Jesus was born a king, and you say he was not a king till Pentecost. There must be a mistake somewhere.

C. He certainly could not have been a king before his kingdom was established, and it was not established until Pentecost.

M. You and those wise men for that. Please hand me your Testament. Now, let us see. When Jesus was on trial, Pilate asked him, "Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." (John xviii. 37.) Here Jesus acknowledged that he was a king born to that end, and Pilate believed it, for he "wrote a title, and put it on the cross . . . Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." (John xix. 19.) And Pilate could not be induced to change this title.

C. I thought I had read in the Bible that Christ was made a king at Pentecost.

M. Mr. Brent's "Gospel Plan of Salvation" reads that way, but Christ's plan does not.

C. Then, if Christ was a king, what throne did he occupy, and over whom did he rule?

M. I will let Isaiah and the apostles answer. "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever." (Isa. ix. 7.) "And the Lord shall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever." (Luke i. 32, 33.) We see from these passages, (1) that the throne of David was the only throne promised, and the only one given to Jesus; (2) that of the increase of his government and peace there shall be *no end* upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom; (3) that he should reign over the house of Jacob, or Israel, *forever*. Did David ever sit upon the throne of that new kingdom which you say was set up at Pentecost?

C. Pshaw! You have missed the whole thing. Give me one verse from Acts, and I will accept that.

M. Very well. "Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him (David), that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up *Christ* to sit on his throne." (Acts ii. 30.) So, you see, on the very day of Pentecost it was stated that Christ should sit on the throne of David. Now, if the Jewish Church was just about to be done away, and a new Church just going to be organized, this would have been the *time* and *place* for Peter to have made some mention of it, would it not?

C. Well, *it may seem so to you*. Who were the apostles to rule over? Had they the right to rule anybody?

M. Yes. From Washington to Garfield, our Presidents have had subordinate officers; and from David to Christ all who sat upon the throne of God's kingdom had their

subordinate officers. The apostles were Christ's subordinate officers. They had no authority to rule in the Church, except as it was given them by Christ. We will consider the position of the apostles in the Church under the following head, viz.:

WHO WERE THE APOSTLES APPOINTED TO JUDGE?

C. Now, Brother Methodist, be very careful to confine yourself to the Bible on this point, for it is very important that we should know whether they were to rule in the new Church or in the old Jewish Church.

M. I am not willing to advance an idea that cannot be fully sustained by the Bible.

C. Tell me, then, who the apostles were appointed to judge or rule.

M. The twelve tribes of Israel.

C. Astonishing! Don't you know that the new Church which was organized at Pentecost has no connection whatever with the twelve tribes? How could the apostles rule in an organization that was done away at Pentecost?

M. I will let Jesus answer. "And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (Luke xxii. 29, 30.) Is that satisfactory?

C. I will study that passage some, for the apostles must have ruled over the new Church, I think.

M. When you study it, please note the following points: (1) It is the words of Jesus just after he had instituted his Supper; (2) Jesus placed his table in the twelve tribes, for the passage reads, "That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes;" (3) the twelve tribes sprung from the house of Jacob; and (4) I have showed you that Christ reigned over the house of Jacob. (Luke i. 33.) Seeing that the Lord placed his table in the twelve tribes, and you say the new Church has

no connection with the twelve tribes, I should like to know who placed the table which you call the Lord's table in that "new Church."

C. You think, then, that Christ and his apostles did not establish a new Church, but continued the Jewish Church under the name of the twelve tribes.

M. That is my belief. Will you accept it?

C. I will not, unless you give me some proof from the Acts of the Apostles.

M. Very well. When Paul spoke in his defense before Festus and Agrippa, he said: "Unto which promise our twelve tribes instantly serving God day and night hope to come. For which hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews." (Acts xxvi. 7.) Observe the following points: (1) Paul claimed no other hope than the hope of the twelve tribes; (2) he uttered this language twenty-six years after Pentecost; (3) if there was a new Church established at Pentecost, it seems that Paul did not belong to it, or he would have had the hope of the "new Church," and not of the twelve tribes. Do you wish any further proof?

C. Yes, sir; as this is a vital question, I want all the proof I can get. Can you give me any thing from the Epistles?

M. Certainly. "James, a servant of God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting." (James i. 1.) From this you see that James dedicated his Epistle to the twelve tribes, and not to "new Church." Now, remember that James wrote this Epistle several years after Pentecost, but he does not seem to have heard of that "new Church." Did any inspired apostle ever address a letter to the "new Church?"

C. I do not remember that they did; but we will be all right when we get to heaven. God knows his true Church.

M. Let us see if we can find any mention made of the

"new Church" in connection with heaven. In speaking of the heavenly Jerusalem, St. John said it "had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel." (Rev. xxi. 12.) Now, if God established a "new Church" at Pentecost, and did away with the Church in the twelve tribes, as you teach, does it not look strange that he did not have its name written somewhere about the heavenly Jerusalem?

C. I do not understand that. I am getting worried with this matter, anyhow, and I wish to dismiss this twelve tribe business, and talk with you on the subject under the title of kingdom. I know I can sustain my theory under that head.

M. I will take great pleasure in talking to you about the kingdom, but I wish to add another thought to this "twelve tribe business," as you call it. Let us enter into the "new Jerusalem," and see if there has been any arrangement made there for the "new Church." "On either side of the river was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." (Rev. xxii. 2.) There, you see, is fruit representing each of the twelve tribes, but none to represent the "new Church." Now, I will sum up some of the points I have made. (1) If there was a "new Church" established at Pentecost, Christ did not rule it, for he ruled the house of Jacob, or the twelve tribes; (2) the apostles had no care over it, for they were appointed "judges of the twelve tribes;" (3) the Lord did not give it any table, for he put his table in the twelve tribes; (4) God did not appoint any apostle to write an epistle to it; (5) its name is not written on any one of the gates of the new Jerusalem, but the names of the twelve tribes are written there; (6) there is nothing in heaven to represent it; (7) there is no mention made of it in the Bible.

M. I shall gladly hear you. But tell me, do you believe that God has a *visible* and an *invisible* kingdom in this world?

M. From the Bible.

M. Paul says the kingdom of God is "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." (Rom. xiv. 17.) Righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, are all invisible, and yet Paul gives them as the component parts of God's kingdom. Now, if all of the parts of God's kingdom are invisible, is not the kingdom invisible?

M. Very well. Jesus said to his followers, "The kingdom of God is within you." (Luke xvii. 21.) Observe that he does not say "the kingdom of God shall be in you after it is established at Pentecost," but he said "is within you." Is that satisfactory?

M Certainly I do; and the visible kingdom has good and bad people in it, while the kingdom of grace, or spiritual kingdom, does not contain one bad person.

M. By Christ's own language: "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind; which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away: so shall it be at the end of the world."

of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire." (Matt. xiii. 47-50.) Observe, (1) the kingdom is like the net; (2) the net caught good and bad; (3) good and bad people get into the visible kingdom; (4) the angels will sever the wicked from among the just, and cast them into the fire; (5) so we see that some who are in the visible kingdom will be cast into hell at the last day.

C. I am surprised that I never noticed that before. How do people get into these kingdoms—the visible and the invisible?

M. By water baptism, administered to the visible man, we are brought into the visible kingdom; by spiritual baptism, administered to the spiritual man, we are brought into the spiritual kingdom. So you see that a visible ordinance brings us into the visible kingdom, and an invisible ordinance brings us into the invisible kingdom.

C. You talk like there were two men in one man, one visible and the other invisible. Can you give me chapter and verse for that?

M. Yes, sir. "Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." (2 Cor. iv. 16.) You see, Paul speaks of two men—the body, or outward man, is visible; the soul, or inward man, is invisible.

C. That does seem to be so; but what does that have to do with setting up the kingdom, or infant baptism?

M. I wanted to show you that God had an invisible kingdom, which cannot be entered by any one except those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; and that he had a visible kingdom, into which all persons should be admitted in infancy. The net gathered *all* kinds—big, little, old, young, good and bad. Taking bad fish into the net did not make them good; nor does taking bad people into the visible kingdom of God make them good, but it gives them better opportunities for becoming good than they could have out of the kingdom.

C. How do you prove that we get into the "invisible" kingdom, as you call it, by the Holy Ghost?

M. By the language of Christ and his apostles.

C. Will you give me chapter and verse?

M. Certainly. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark xvi. 15, 16.) It had been said of Jesus, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost." Jesus, then, is the administrator of Holy Ghost baptism, and faith is the condition on which it is received; so "he that believeth and *is*"—in the act of believing—"baptized" with the Holy Ghost "shall be saved" from past sins.

C. I always thought that meant water baptism. What leads you to believe it means Holy Ghost baptism?

M. The "signs that should follow them that believed" were the signs that followed Holy Ghost baptism; and Paul said, when speaking of the body of Christ, or the invisible kingdom, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." (1 Cor. xii. 13.) Again: "But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." (1 Cor. vi. 11.) You see from these passages that the Holy Ghost is applied to the spiritual, or *inward*, man, and *washes him, justifies him, sanctifies him*, and *baptizes him* into the invisible kingdom.

C. Look here, brother, you have got my head to wool-gathering, and you have dodged around and kept me from my point. Now, let us talk *directly* about

SETTING UP THE KINGDOM, OR CHURCH.

I wish you to understand that what I have to say relates to the visible kingdom of God, for I know nothing of the invisible kingdom about which you speak. I say the Church of God was established on the day of Pentecost, in the city of Jerusalem, by the Apostle Peter, and I can prove it by the Bible.

M. Well, if you can, that will certainly settle the question so far as I am concerned. Please give me the scripture.

C. "In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed." (Dan. ii. 44.) Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build my Church." (Matt. xvi. 18.) Now, it does seem to me that if any man would just lay aside prejudice, these two passages would convince him that the Church was to be established after Christ spoke this language, and the day of Pentecost was certainly the day on which it was done. Now, I would like to know how you will set these two passages aside.

M. I do not wish to set them aside. I will let the divine writers explain them. "In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old." (Amos ix. 11.) Now, if we can find what this prophecy referred to, it will enable us to get some light on the passages you quoted. Let us read Acts xv. 15, 16: "And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up." The apostles were considering the matter of circumcision, and also the reception of the Gentiles into the Church; and they declared that God put no difference between the Jews and Gentiles, and that bringing in the Gentiles was "building again the tabernacle of David, and setting it up." Now, the passages you read cannot refer to any other Church than the one referred to in the passages I have just read, and they do not refer to establishing a new Church but to "building again the tabernacle of David as of old." That accords with Christ sitting on the throne of David, as I have already proved in another chapter.

C. I am not ready to yield my point yet; for if you prove that the present Church is a continuation of the Jewish Church, I do not see how we can avoid infant membership,

for they were certainly in the Jewish Church. But I think the Jewish Church was a type of the Christian Church.

M That cannot benefit your theory, even if it were true; for if children were in the type, they certainly should be in the antitype, unless you can find a special command from God to leave them out, for they were put in by his special command.

C I do not remember any command to leave them out; but I cannot accept your doctrine, because there is not sufficient identity between the old and new Church.

M I think there is: 1. They have the same Saviour. The promise to Abraham was, "Thy seed, which is Christ." (Gal. iii. 16, 17.) 2. The covenant made with Abraham was "confirmed before of God in Christ." (Gal. iii. 17.) 3. The law was a school-master to the Jews to bring them to Christ, that they might be justified by faith." (Gal. iii. 24.) 4. "They drank of that Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ." (1 Cor. x. 4.) They had the same condition of justification. "Abraham believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness." (Gen. xv. 6.) Paul made this passage the basis of his grand argument on salvation by faith, in Rom. iii. and iv. They had the same gospel. "God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham." (Gal. iii. 8.) "Unto us was the gospel preached as well as unto them." (Heb. iv. 2.) So you see they had the same Saviour. the same gospel, and the same condition of pardon. And now, brother, I wish to say that the divine writers often spoke of the Church before the day of Pentecost, and they nowhere intimated that it should be done away and a new one made.

C Will you give me some of the passages in which they spoke of the Church before Pentecost?

M With pleasure. Speaking of Jesus, Stephen said, "This is he that was in the Church in the wilderness." (Acts vii. 38.) David said, "In the midst of the con

gregation will I praise thee." (Ps. xxii. 22.) The congregation spoken of by David is called the Church by Paul. "In the midst of the Church will I sing praise unto thee." (Heb. ii. 12.) Of certain offenses Jesus said to his disciples, "Tell it unto the Church." (Matt. xviii 17.) All of these passages refer to the Church before Pentecost, and none of them intimate that it should be done away on the day of Pentecost, or any other day.

C. But you must remember that the day of Pentecost was a great day, and many changes took place, one of which was the old Church was done away and the new one was organized.

M. If you are correct, that would have been the right time and the proper place in which to make some mention of it. We will turn to the second chapter of Acts, and see if we can find any account of the new organization. "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." (Acts ii. 41.) This is the only language in connection with Pentecost that gives an account of the relation of any one being changed, and the statement is, "About three thousand souls were added." Added to what?

C. The new Church, of course, which they were then organizing.

M. Did Peter take himself in, and did the other apostles take themselves in too; and then did they all take the three thousand in? or how was it?

C. I do not know just how it was, but—

M. Don't you think it was a great oversight in the writer of the Acts that he did not tell us that the new Church was organized *then* and *there*, if such was the case? Does he not mention hundreds of things that are not half so important to the Christian world as that would have been if it were a fact?

C. Well, it does not look quite so clear to me as it did.

M. Do you really believe that God was experimenting

with his people for four thousand years, and that all of his experiments failed until Pentecost, when he found just the thing he wanted, and wiped out all of his failures, and established the new Church as a monument of his first successful experiment? *Do you believe it?*

C. I think I have said nothing that would justify the conclusion that I believe God to be so puerile as that.

M. If your theory is an exponent of your faith, I could not resist the conclusion.

C. Well, I know I can show from the Bible that we are not living under the old covenant that God made with Abraham and I propose that we take up the subject under the head of

COVENANT.

Now, my position is that God did away with the covenant he made with Abraham, and that we are living under a new and better covenant; and I will see you out on this proposition, for I am fully sustained by the Bible.

M. I will be pleased to hear the scripture which sustains you in that position.

C. You shall have it. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah." (Heb. viii. 8.) Now, don't you see that God made a *new* covenant? and why will you still contend for the Abrahamic covenant?

M. Of course God made a new covenant; but I thought you were to show that he made a new Church. A covenant is not a Church, is it?

C. O no; but when God made a new Church, he made a new covenant with *it*, don't you see?

M. Then you must give me another passage, for the one you read says the new covenant was made "*with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah,*" and a new Church is not mentioned. From the house of Israel sprung the twelve tribes; so you see the new covenant was made with the twelve tribes, and not with a new Church

C. Well, it knocks the props from under your theory, anyhow: for if God made a new covenant, that does away with the covenant with Abraham.

M. Not at all. It does not affect the Abrahamic covenant in any way. Please read the next verse.

C. "Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt." (Heb. viii. 9.)

M. There! You missed the true idea in the passage by stopping before you read it all. This "new covenant," you see, was to displace the one God made with his people "when he led them out of Egypt," and not the one he made with Abraham four hundred and thirty years before that.

C. That is so. Why did n't I see that before?

M. Perhaps you were not looking for that point. It is hard for a man to see what he does not wish to see.

C. What covenant did God make with the house of Israel when he brought them out of Egypt?

M. He gave them the law of commandments contained in ordinances. It included the sacrifices that pointed to Christ, and when he came they had an end, for Paul says this law was added "till the seed should come to whom the promise was made." (Gal. iii. 19.)

C. But Christ took the Jewish Church out of the way, and nailed it to his cross; so your theory won't do, at last.

M. Nailed the Church of God to his cross? You astound me! I suppose you refer to Col. ii. 14. Please read it.

C. "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross."

M. Ah! It was "ordinances," and not the Church, that was nailed to the cross. God had given these ordinances as a pledge that Christ would come and redeem the world, and when Jesus died on the cross the pledge was redeemed and the ordinances were like a note when the amount expressed in its face is paid—**cancel**'led.

C. If I fail to find the new Church under the new covenant, I am at a loss to know what to do, for that seems to be the only chance left for me. Don't you think doing away with the ordinances nullified the covenant with Abraham?

M. I will let Paul answer: "And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect' (Gal. iii. 17.) From the covenant God made with Abraham to the departure of Israel from Egypt was four hundred and thirty years; so the law mentioned in this passage is the law God gave the house of Israel "when he took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt," and the new covenant had reference to no other law, as I have shown you, and Paul says it "*cannot disannul*" the Abrahamic covenant.

C. But I read of a *better covenant on better promises*.

M. Certainly. The new covenant puts the law of God "into the mind, and writes it in the hearts" of his children (Heb. viii. 10), and that is much better than to have it placed before their eyes in the forms of "bleeding birds and bleeding beasts," as it was in the law of ordinances. I am at a loss to know how God could make a better covenant than the one he made with Abraham, for it was "confirmed before of God in Christ." That would be hard to improve, would it not?

C. You think, then, that God made an unlimited covenant with Abraham, and that the Church is under that covenant at the present time?

M. I do; for if the Church was organized under a limited covenant, when the time was served the Church ceased to exist; but if the covenant was unlimited, the Church will have an unlimited existence, for God never made two covenants to establish the same end.

C. How will you prove the Abrahamic covenant to be unlimited? I must admit the truth of your logic, but I think you will fail to prove your first proposition.

M. To the law and to the testimony. But before I begin the argument, I wish to make a few statements: (1) All of the Bible was written by Jews; (2) all of Christ's apostles were Jews; (3) all of God's covenants were made with the Jews. Do you accept these statements?

C. All but the last; I think that God's new covenant was made with the Gentiles.

M. Paul says it was made "with the house of Israel."

C. How, then, can the Gentiles be saved, if God made no covenant with them?

M. I will let Paul answer. Speaking of the Gentiles coming into the Jewish Church, he said: "And thou (Gentile), being a wild olive-tree, wert grafted in among them (Jews), and with them (Jews) partakest of the root and fatness of the olive-tree" (Jewish Church). (Rom. xi. 17.) "For if thou wert cut out of the olive-tree which is wild by nature (kingdom of darkness), and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive-tree, how much more shall these (Jews), which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive-tree (Church)?" (Rom. xi. 24.) Paul wrote this about twenty-seven years after Pentecost, and it was a fine time for him to have told the Gentiles that God had made a new Church for them, if such had been the fact; but he tells them they were "grafted into the good olive-tree," or Jewish Church.

C. But you have not shown that all of God's covenants were made with the Jews. Please give me chapter and verse.

M. Of the Jews Paul said: "Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God and the promises." (Rom. ix. 4.) So the Gentiles have no separate covenant, but must comply with the terms of the covenant made with the Jews in order to their salvation.

C. I do not understand that. You promised to show that the covenant God made with Abraham was unlimited; and if you will do that by the Bible, I will have my children

brought into covenant relation with God, for children were certainly included in that covenant.

M. Are you certain you will stand to that?

C. I am. Our Church has none of your *creeds* or *confessions of faith*. Every member is allowed his own private judgment.

M. Creed or no creed, you will likely have trouble with your brethren if you have your children baptized. But I will make good my statement.

ABRAHAMIC COVENANT UNLIMITED.

C. Please give me chapter and verse; for I love my children, and want them to have all of the benefits of God's covenant to which they are entitled.

M. I will do so. God said to Abraham: "And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee." (Gen. xvii. 7.) Is *everlasting* limited, or unlimited?

C. Pshaw! Everlasting in that passage just means *for ages*, and all of that covenant was done away at Pentecost.

M. In the Old Testament, when the word "everlasting" is used in reference to the Abrahamic covenant, it just means "till Pentecost," does it?

C. W-e-l-l, I suppose it does.

M. I will give you another case. Of the rainbow covenant, God said to Noah: "And the bow shall be in the cloud, and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth." (Gen. ix. 16.) Do you think the rainbow covenant was limited?

C. Of course not. All agree that it was unlimited. We are under the rainbow covenant now.

M. If the correctness of your theory depended on your proving the rainbow covenant to be limited, could you not

as easily prove it from the Bible as you could that the Abrahamic covenant was limited?

C. W-e-l-l, I don't know

M. Suppose we take another passage. "He hath remembered his covenant forever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations; which covenant he made with Abraham and his oath unto Isaac; and confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant, saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan." (Ps. cv. 8-11.) Observe: (1) This was the covenant God made with Abraham; (2) God commanded it to a *thousand generations*; (3) God obligated himself to maintain it with "his oath unto Isaac;" (4) he *confirmed* it unto Jacob for a *law*, and to Israel for an *everlasting* covenant; (5) in confirmation he gave them the land of Canaan. Does that not make it very plain?

C. It may seem so to you, but I think it all ended on the day of Pentecost.

M. If it did, what becomes of God's word and oath, for he *said* and *swore* that it should stand to a *thousand* generations; and Matthew says: "So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations." (Matt. i. 17.) Let us say that from the birth of Christ till the day of Pentecost was one generation, and how many generations have we?

C. Forty-three.

M. The covenant that God swore should last to a *thousand* generations you say ended with *forty-three* generations or, in plain words, God made a mistake of *nine hundred and fifty-seven generations*. That is quite a mistake in a matter of such moment. Don't you think it possible you may be mistaken?

C. W-e-l-l, of course—I—well, my head seems to be wool-gathering again. It really looks like you have very nearly

sustained your proposition; and if you could give me a passage or two from the New Testament, I do not see how I could resist any longer.

M. I will do so. "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." (Gal. iii. 29.) All of a man's seed belong to his family but the seed spoken of here is any one who belongs to Christ. That is, all Christians are the seed of Abraham and heirs according to *the promise* made to Abraham. So, you see, all who belong to the family, or Church, of Christ belong to the same family, or Church, to which Abraham belonged, and are called his seed; hence, Abraham is called "the father of us all." (Rom. iv. 16.) And it is also stated that "the promise that he should be the heir of the world was not to Abraham, or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith." (Rom. vi. 13.) To be the children of Abraham, we only have to "walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham." (Rom. iv. 12.) Not in the steps of some other faith, but *the same faith* that Abraham had. So Paul says, "Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise." (Gal. iv. 28.)

C. If you could give me one passage from the Acts, I would be compelled to give up my theory.

M. "Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed." (Acts iii. 25.) This was the language of Peter, and was spoken after the day of Pentecost; yet he tells the people that they are the children of the covenant that God made with Abraham. Peter was the speaker on the day of Pentecost, and if a "new Church" was organized on that day under a new covenant, he certainly knew it; and does it not seem strange that he would tell the people they were still under the Abrahamic covenant?

C. It does seem so.

M. Can you show where God ever made a covenant with his people, and did not include children?

C. I do not remember any such covenant just now.

M. Will you, then, have your children brought into covenant relation with God by baptism?

C. I will, provided I cannot find scripture to overturn your theory. Give me one week to examine all the texts you have used, and see what scripture I can find in support of the "new Church" theory, and I will report to you.

M. Please allow me to give you a few more points to consider. If God is the author of infant membership under the Abrahamic covenant, and that covenant was unlimited, does it not follow that infant membership is unlimited, unless God made some provision in the covenant for leaving them out at the expiration of a given time?

C. It does seem so.

M. If we leave them out without God's authority, are we not trying to destroy the visible Church of God?

C. It looks that way to me.

M. I showed you that the Church on earth and in heaven is one family. (Eph. iii. 15.) Now, I have shown you that the family, or Church, in Abraham's day had children in it; and that you admit. Also, you admit that the family in heaven has children in it. So, you see, children had a right to membership in the Church of God in the past, and they have a right to membership in the future. Now, does it not seem strange and inconsistent that any one should exclude them in the present?

C. That does look very strange.

M. Can you think of any objection to infant membership now that would not have been an objection in Abraham's day?

C. I do not think of any now.

M. Do you believe that God loves your children as well as he loved the children of Abraham?

C. I see no reason why he should not. He is no respecter of persons.

M. Do you think your children can do better without the benefits of God's covenant than Abraham's childrer could have done?

C. I suppose not; but I cannot see what good it would do to baptize them before they know what it is for.

M. Do you suppose Abraham's eight days old babies knew what they were circumcised for?

C. Of course not.

M. If Abraham had entertained your views of infant membership when God commanded him (Gen. xvii. 9-14) to give his infants the "token" of his covenant, don't you think he would have said: "Lord, I cannot see what good that will do; and if I were to do it, I am afraid the little things might cry; and besides, I am afraid when they grow to manhood they will be dissatisfied with it, and that would be awful. Lord, it looks so foolish to me, I cannot do it?"

C. W-e-l-l, I—I wish to study the matter one week, and then I will give you my conclusion.

M. Very well; be sure to study closely all the points I have given you. Here is a manuscript which contains all I have given you, and several more. It will assist you in getting up the points in order.

LAST MEETING.

C. Well, Brother Methodist, I have given an entire week to the points you presented on infant membership.

M. Did you give them a *candid* examination?

C. I am sure I did. I looked over the manuscript you gave me, and fell upon two sentences which caused me to reflect a little, and I determined to be honest.

M. What were the sentences?

C. The first one was, "Prejudice keeps many from judging fairly." The second was, "Of all prejudices, religious ones are the most stubborn." When I read these, I resolved to lay aside all prejudice, and let truth prevail.

M. That was right. What was the result of your examination?

C. The manuscript enabled me to get up the points in the following order, viz.: You showed (1) that, according to my own theory, infants should be baptized; (2) that if I was in the Church, and my children were, as I claimed, better than I am, they certainly had a right to a place in the Church; (3) that if, as I believed, my children were good enough for heaven, they certainly were good enough for God's Church on earth; (4) that Jesus Christ was born a king, and sat on the throne of David, and not on the throne of a new Church; (5) that Jesus ruled the "house of Jacob," and not a new Church; (6) that the twelve apostles were appointed by Christ to rule the twelve tribes, and not a new Church; (7) that Jesus placed his table in the twelve tribes, and not in a new Church; (8) that Paul had the hope of the twelve tribes, and not of a new Church; (9) that James dedicated his Epistle to the twelve tribes, and not to a new Church; (10) that arrangements were made in heaven for the twelve tribes, and not for a new Church; (11) that no divine writer ever addressed an epistle to, or spoke of, a new Church; (12) that there was no kingdom, or Church, organized on the day of Pentecost; (13) that the kingdom of David was established by the apostles; (14) that the Abrahamic Church had the same Saviour, the same gospel, and the same condition of pardon that it now has; (15) that God never made two covenants to establish the same end; (16) that God never made a covenant to take the place of the one he made with Abraham; (17) that God made his new covenant "with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah," and not with a new Church; (18) that the new covenant was to displace the one he made with his people "when he took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt," and not the one he made with Abraham; (19) that if there was a new Church established on the day of Pentecost, it has

no Lord's table in it, and God has no covenant with it, so far as the Bible shows; (20) that the covenant God made with Abraham was unlimited; (21) that infants were included in that covenant, and that their right to Church-membership is unlimited; (22) that if God put infants into his Church, and we put them out without his authority, we are trying to tear down the Church of God; (23) that God loves our children as well as he loved the children of Abraham; (24) that our children need the benefits of God's covenant as much as Abraham's did; (25) that we should lay aside all prejudice, and give this matter a candid investigation; (26) that we—

M. There, that will do. You have gotten the lesson well. Now, give me your conclusion.

C. I have often said, publicly and privately, that I was willing to take the Bible on any subject, and I am going to make my word good. I am free to say that I think you have proved beyond a doubt that there was no kingdom, or Church, organized on the day of Pentecost, and that the covenant with Abraham was unlimited; and I think I am bound by that covenant to take my children into covenant relation with God. I have had great prejudice against infant membership, but I have made it a matter of prayer for the last week, and I am determined to do my duty. O how pleasant it will be to have my children, my "household," with me in the Church! I do not know that the households of Lydia, the jailer, and Stephanas, had children in them, but I come as near knowing that they did as that they did not; so I will just adopt Bible language, and have my "household" baptized. I reckon no reasonable person can object to that.

M. Whether any one objects or not, your plan is safe, because the Scripture bears you out. But you have been preaching for some years against infant baptism. Were you perfectly satisfied with your theory on that subject all the while?

C. I cannot say that I was fully satisfied.

M. What seemed to be the trouble?

C. I will mention two points. You know that our Church teaches, in common with others, that the departure of Israel from Egypt was a type of sinners leaving the kingdom of Satan, and that the baptism which they received while crossing the Red Sea was a type of Christian baptism. I read in Ex. xii. 37 that there were "about six hundred thousand on foot that were men, *besides children*." Also, in 1 Cor. x. 2, that they "were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." If that baptism was a type of Christian baptism, as we all teach, it was hard for me to see how we could refuse to baptize infants, as God certainly baptized them on that occasion.

M. I do not wonder that you were puzzled over that. Please give me the other point.

C. I noticed that the shepherd and his flock were often made to represent Christ and his followers. Especially in the tenth chapter of John, Jesus calls his followers his sheep, himself "the good Shepherd," and his Church "the fold;" and I knew it was the universal custom for shepherds to put the lambs into the fold with the old sheep. Also, Jesus said to Peter, "Feed my lambs." In regard to a flock of sheep, I knew it would be better to leave the old sheep out of the fold than it would to leave the lambs out, for they needed more care than the old sheep. If the shepherd, sheep, and fold represented Christ, his followers, and his Church, I could not understand why we should take grown people into the Church, and leave the babes—lambs—out.

M. Do you remember any thing else that disturbed your mind on the subject?

C. Yes, sir; a comment I heard you make on the commission, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." (Matt. xxviii. 19.) You said: "This passage does not say baptize men women, or children, and

yet it says just the same about baptizing children that it does about baptizing men and women. The command is, 'Baptize nations,' and nations are composed of men, women and children. All admit that men and women are proper subjects for baptism, but some say children are not. Why do they say so? Is it because it is anywhere forbidden in the word of God? No. Is it because of any covenant God made with his people in which he did not include children? No. Is it because the command to 'baptize nations' does not include children? No, that cannot be, for children outnumber any other class in nations. Do you say it is because our children cannot be taught? Did not God command his people in the days of Moses to teach his commandments to their children when they sat down, and when they rose up, when they went out and when they came in? and did that injunction disqualify infants only eight days old for membership in the Church, because they could not understand God's law at that age? No. Suppose we expel from the Church all of the one hundred and fifty pound babies who do not understand the law of God perfectly, how many would we have left? *Few, VERY FEW.* Take an illustration: Speaking of my sheep, I say to my servant, 'Go ye, therefore, put my flock into the fold feeding them.' The servant puts in the old sheep, and leaves the lambs out. I see the lambs in great distress, and hear their piteous cries. I say, 'Tom, why did you leave the lambs out?' He replies, 'Because, master, you did not say put up the lambs.' 'Did I say put up the old sheep?' 'No sir, master, but you said put up the flock, *feeding them* and I knew the lambs were too little to eat hay, and I thought, of course, you just meant put up those that could eat; and I thought the lambs would not know what I was putting them up for, and I thought, What good can it do to put them up when they can't eat? better wait till they get big enough to know what it all means. So I just left them out.' Ah! there is the secret! *You thought, and*

therefore leave children out of the fold of Christ. God put them in, but *you thought*, and turned them out." I must confess that I was a little fretted with you when you made those remarks, for I did not know how to meet your argument, and I was too stubborn to admit that I was in an error; but now I am thoroughly convinced, and since you have shown that the Abrahamic covenant was unlimited, you have dug up the tap-root of Campbellism, and destroyed our beginning-corner, for you know that the truth of our whole theory depends upon the "new Church" established at Pentecost. You have shown that there was no new Church organized on that day, so our whole theory must go down.

M. No surveyor can run correct lines from an incorrect beginning-corner.

C. No, sir. He may cross the correct line now and then, but he will not follow it.

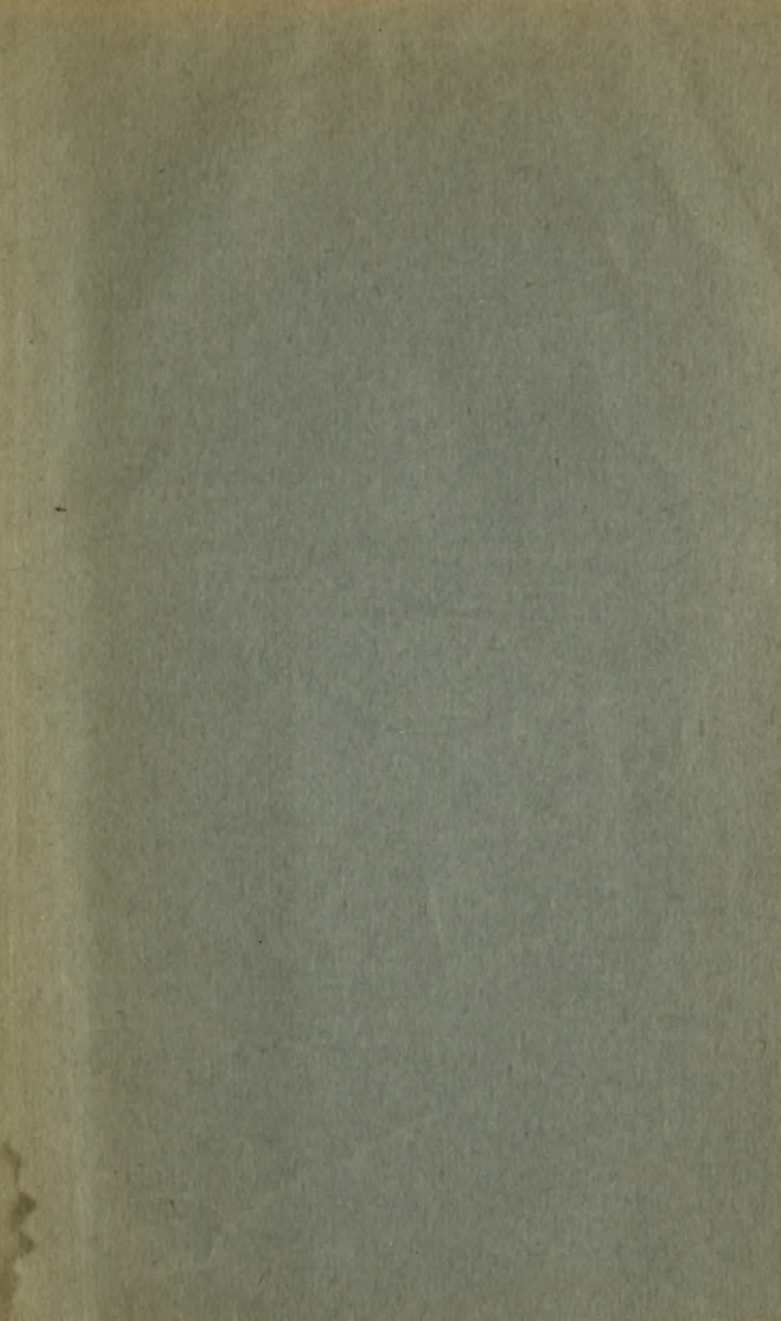
M. From a wrong beginning-corner your brethren have run into many errors, and some time in the near future I expect to take the theological grub-ax to many of them, and grub out the last germ.

C. I wish to be at the grubbing.

M. You shall have a ticket in due time.

C. I am sure some of my brethren will not like you for dealing so plainly with our pet theory; and notwithstanding all of our boasted liberty of private judgment on the teachings of the Bible, I expect to have great trouble about having my children baptized, and I think it likely that I may be expelled from the Church, or they may "with draw" from me, as we call it.

M. I rather suspect that your brethren will find very serious objections to your private judgment in this matter as it does not happen to accord with theirs; but be firm, and God will sustain you. Farewell until the next grubbing. God bless you!



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